

# LEGENDS

Continued from C1

in Bloomington.

Much to his surprise, Dorson was at Indiana, too.

"It was purely coincidental," Brunvand said.

Four years later, he had his doctorate — in folklore. He subsequently taught in Idaho, then Illinois and, in 1966, was lured by the skiing, fishing and a strong tradition of folklore studies to Utah. He's been in Salt Lake City ever since.

"We just liked it here a lot with four kids, and they grew up here," Brunvand explained.

In the '70s he prepared a handout for his folklore classes at the U., collecting urban legends about hook-hand killers, sewer alligators and fancy cars reeking of death.

"The folder kept expanding," he said. "I started wondering: How many of these stories are there? Can we trace their histories, like fairy tales or old legends?"

That thought and further study resulted in an article for the magazine Psychology Today in 1980, and then the book "The Vanishing Hitchhiker."

With his newspaper columns, three published books, one in prepa-

ration and a fifth already in progress, Brunvand sometimes wonders where his side-career will lead.

"New stories are very rare," he said, "and if you have three or four very new stories, that's about par for a year." He still waiting for the 1989 crop.

But Brunvand isn't worried. The legends are always mutating, for one thing — most are actually variations on old tales. He can study groups of stories with themes, or those with morals, or concentrate on the ones that are really jokes. The computer explosion offers new avenues for research: legends are spreading via bulletin boards, computer networks, news groups and electronic mail. And he could always branch out into government and bureaucratic legends — or even into the dark world of espionage, researching the nasty trend of "disinformation."

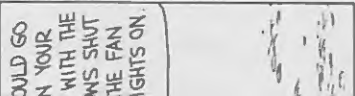
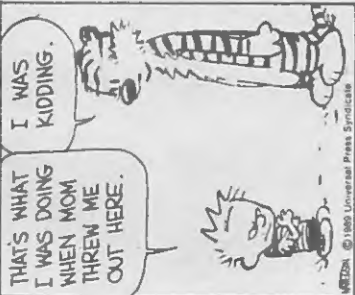
Or he could make practical use of his first college degree.

"Mom doesn't think I've got a real job anyway," Brunvand said. "I could always go into journalism."

Jan Harold Brunvand has collected a plethora of books and stories relating to the alligator in the sewer — one of his all-time favorite urban legends. His third book, "Curses! Broiled Again" will present a look at some of the other "hot" stories currently making the rounds.



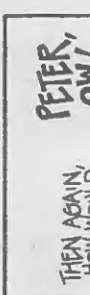
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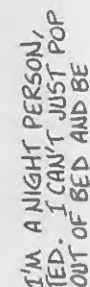
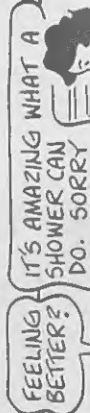
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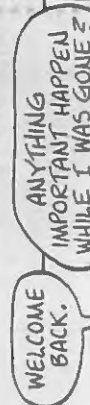
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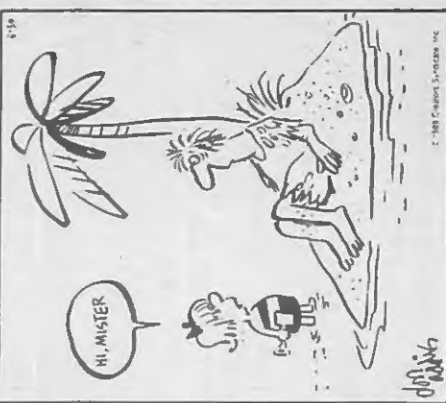
**SALLY FORTH**



**BY GREG HOWARD**



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